

NATION/WORLD DIGEST

House Speaker Signals Budget Compromise

WASHINGTON (AP) — Despite fresh pressure from tea party conservatives, House Speaker John Boehner said Thursday that Republicans "can't impose our will" on the White House and Senate Democrats on legislation to cut tens of billions of dollars in federal spending.

At a news conference, Boehner, R-Ohio, denied Democratic suggestions that he has already agreed to jettison nearly half of the \$61 billion in cuts passed by the House a month ago.

But as was the case with Majority Leader Eric Cantor, R-Va., earlier in the week, he did not say the demand was non-negotiable. "Our goal is to cut spending, not shut down the government," he said.

The government is running on the second of two short-term spending bills, and at the insistence of Republicans, a total of \$10 billion has been cut so far.

Without action by Congress, the money will run out on April 9. Lawmakers are seeking a compromise that will extend to the Sept. 30 end of the spending year.

Wisconsin Judge Halts Governor's Union Law

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — A Wisconsin judge on Thursday did what thousands of pro-union protesters and boycotting Democratic lawmakers couldn't, halting Republican Gov. Scott Walker's plans — at least temporarily — to cut most public workers' pay and strip them of most of their union rights.

Dane County Circuit Judge Maryann Sumi issued a declaration stating in no uncertain terms that the collective bargaining law that led to weeks of large protests at the state Capitol had not taken effect, contradicting Republican arguments that it had because a state office published it online. Hours later, Walker said his administration would comply, despite misgivings about the order.

"In my mind it's not a matter of if the law goes back (into effect), it's just a matter of when," Walker said.

Democrats and union leaders said Sumi's declaration showed the arrogance that Walker and his allies, including top aide, Department of Administration Secretary Mike Huesch, have shown in trying to push through the polarizing law.

"Mr. Walker and Mr. Huesch chose to ignore her warning that they were jeopardizing the finances and stability of state government, apparently believing they are above the law. This morning with her added order she has taken away their last excuse," Assembly Democratic Leader Peter Barca said.

Mo. To Halt Extended Unemployment Benefits

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — Thousands of people in Missouri who have been unemployed for more than a year soon will lose their jobless benefits, marking a significant victory for Republican fiscal hawks who are crusading against government spending.

When eligibility ends Saturday, Missouri will become the only state to voluntarily quit a federal stimulus program that offers extended benefits. Michigan, Arkansas and Florida also recently took steps to cut back on money going to the unemployed, although they targeted state benefits instead.

"We have to take a stand and say, 'When is enough enough?' and send a message to the federal government, and hopefully shame them into doing the right thing and quit spending money that they don't have," said state Sen. Jim Lembke, a Republican from St. Louis.

Lembke has led a coalition of four filibustering senators who have blocked legislation necessary to reauthorize Missouri's participation in a federal program offering long-term unemployment benefits. It's been a stunning setback for a bill that had passed the Republican-led House 123-14 two months ago and had the support of GOP Senate leaders and Democratic Gov. Jay Nixon.

As a result, more than 34,000 unemployed residents in Missouri could miss out on \$105 million in benefits over the next nine months. Unlike some other stimulus programs, Missouri's unclaimed money would not be redistributed by the federal government to other states. It simply would remain unspent.

Ex-Police Officers Head To Prison For Killing

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Calling the crimes inexcusable and barbaric, a judge sentenced two former New Orleans police officers to prison Thursday for their roles in the shooting death of an unarmed man whose body was later set on fire in the chaotic aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

The 25-plus years David Warren received for shooting 31-year-old Henry Glover to death was the stiffest punishment so far in the Justice Department's investigations of post-Katrina police misconduct. Ex-officer Gregory McRae was sentenced to more than 17 years in prison for burning Glover's body after he was gunned down.

U.S. District Judge Lance Africk rejected the notion that the cases would deter officers in the future from staying after a storm to protect the public. When Hurricane Katrina hit in August 2005, many officers fled the city, leaving the police department with depleted forces. The National Guard was eventually dispatched to help prevent looting and control much of the city.

Warren said he thought Glover had a gun and posed a threat when he shot him outside a police substation at a strip mall. The judge called his testimony absurd.

"Henry Glover was not at the strip mall to commit suicide. He was there to retrieve some baby clothing," Africk said. "You killed a man. Despite your tendentious arguments to the contrary, it was no mistake."

Russian Billionaire Buys Mansion For \$100M

LOS ALTOS HILLS, Calif. (AP) — A Russian billionaire investor has purchased a lavish, 25,500-square-foot mansion in Silicon Valley for \$100 million, believed to be the most ever paid for a single-family home in the United States.

The *Wall Street Journal* reports that 49-year-old Yuri Milner, an investor in Facebook, Groupon and Zynga, has no immediate plans to move into the home.

Milner is the founder of Digital Sky Technologies, an investment firm he started in 2005.

The mansion purchased by Milner is a French-style chateau set on 18 acres in hills overlooking San Francisco Bay.

The estate has a ballroom, wine cellar, gym, spa and pools inside and outside.

Missing Bronx Zoo Cobra Is Found Alive

NEW YORK (AP) — A poisonous Egyptian cobra that disappeared from a Bronx Zoo exhibit was found Thursday after nearly a week on the lam, zoo officials said.

The 24-inch snake was found coiled in a dark corner of the zoo's reptile house, said zoo director Jim Breheny.

"As you can imagine, we are delighted to report that the snake has been found alive and well," he said.

The reptile house had closed last Friday after the snake disappeared and zoo workers couldn't find her.

The snake quickly became the stuff of urban legend. Someone even started pretending to be the cobra on Twitter and sent fake updates to legions of followers.

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Gadhafi Regime Crumbling

Loss Of Foreign Minister May Outweigh Battlefield Gains

BY HADEEL AL-SHALCHI AND RYAN LUCAS

Associated Press

AJDABIYA, Libya — Opponents of Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi were knocked back by government troops for a third straight day Thursday but took heart in a sign that the embattled regime is cracking at the highest levels: the apparent defection of one of the autocrat's closest confidants.

Foreign Minister Moussa Koussa flew to England from Tunisia on Wednesday and the British government said he had resigned. He is privy to all the inner workings of the regime, so his departure could open the door for some hard intelligence, though Britain refused to offer him immunity from prosecution.

"We believe that the regime is crumbling from within," opposition spokesman Mustafa Gheriani said in Benghazi, the rebels' de facto capital.

He also said Gadhafi is "an injured wolf and an injured wolf is much more dangerous than a healthy wolf. But we hope the defections continue and I think he'll find himself with no one around him."

Libyan officials, who initially denied Koussa's defection, said he had resigned because he was sick with diabetes and high blood pressure. Government spokesman Moussa Ibrahim said Koussa was given permission to go to Tunisia, but the regime was surprised to learn he had flown to London.

"I talked to many people and this is not a happy piece of news, but people are saying, 'So what? If someone wants to step down

that's his decision,'" Ibrahim said.

Nations behind the campaign of international airstrikes that have hobbled Libya's military hailed Koussa's resignation as a sign of weakness in Gadhafi's more-than-41-year reign.

Koussa "can help provide critical intelligence about Gaddafi's current state of mind and military plans," said Tommy Vietor, U.S. National Security Council spokesman. He added that his defection "demonstrates that the people around Gaddafi understand his regime is in disarray."

In another blow to the regime, U.S. officials revealed Wednesday that the CIA has sent small teams of operatives into rebel-held eastern Libya while the White House debates whether to arm the opposition.

Despite the setbacks and ongoing airstrikes — now led by NATO — Gadhafi loyalists have retaken much of the territory the rebels had captured since airstrikes began March 19.

Rebels had advanced overnight to the west gate of Brega, a town important to Libya's oil industry that has gone back and forth between rebel and loyalist hands. They were in Brega at dawn, but they soon pulled out under heavy shelling from Gadhafi's forces. Black smoke billowed in the air over Brega as mortars exploded.

"There were loads of (rebel) wounded at the front lines this morning," said rebel fighter Fathi Muktar, 41.

Rebels fired back from sand dunes, chanting "Allahu akbar!" or "God is great!" with each rocket fired. Spotters with binoculars watched

where they landed and ordered adjustments.

Brega was deserted. Many people also have fled Ajdabiya, a rebel-held city about 50 miles (80 kilometers) to the east, for fear that government forces were on their way.

The fighting has highlighted the rebels' weaknesses: Some ran screaming to cars after being frightened by the outgoing fire from their own side.

The U.S. has ruled out using ground troops in Libya but it is considering providing arms to the rebels. Still, White House press secretary Jay Carney said Wednesday no decision has been made yet.

Rebels would require training for any new weapons, but U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates told Congress on Thursday that some other country should provide it. Asked by a lawmaker whether U.S. involvement might inevitably mean "boots on the ground" in Libya, Gates replied, "Not as long as I am in this job."

NATO is among those saying a new U.N. resolution would be required to arm rebels, though Britain and the U.S. disagree. Several world leaders oppose arming rebels, including Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan who said in London that it could "create an environment which could be conducive to terrorism."

Koussa is not the first high-ranking member of the regime to quit — the justice and interior ministers resigned early in the conflict and joined the rebellion based in the east. Koussa, however, is a close confidant of Gadhafi's.

Japan Seeks French, U.S. Expertise

Country Needs Help With Stabilizing Nuclear Plant, Stopping Radiation Leaks

BY RYAN NAKASHIMA AND MARI YAMAGUCHI

Associated Press

TOKYO, Japan — Japan is increasingly turning to other countries for help as it struggles to stabilize its tsunami-stricken nuclear plant and stop radiation leaks that are complicating efforts to recover the bodies of some of the thousands swept away by the towering wave.

French, American and international experts — even a robot — are either in Japan or on their way, and French President Nicholas Sarkozy visited Tokyo on Thursday to meet with the prime minister and show solidarity.

Workers are racing to find the source of contaminated water that has been pooling in the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear plant since the March 11 earthquake and tsunami. The leaks have often forced workers to flee the plant, preventing them from restarting important cooling

systems.

"The amount of water is enormous, and we need any wisdom available," said nuclear safety agency spokesman Hidehiko Nishiyama.

A spokesman for plant operator Tokyo Electric Power Co. said Thursday that radioactive contamination in groundwater 15 yards (meters) under one of six reactors there had been measured at 10,000 times the government standard.

Still, spokesman Naoyuki Matsumo said the company does not believe any drinking water supply is affected by the elevated levels of iodine-131, a radioactive substance that decays quickly, with half disappearing in eight days.

Experts from French nuclear giant Areva, which supplied fuel to the plant, are helping figure out how to dispose of the contaminated water that has begun leaking into the ground and the sea.

"We are not a supplier only for happy days," CEO Anne

Lauvergeon told reporters in Tokyo on Thursday. "We are effectively also there when things become difficult."

Officials from the plant operator, Tokyo Electric Power Co., said they welcome the help.

"U.S. nuclear plants aren't by the ocean, unlike Japanese ones, so we think the French may be able to help us more than the Americans," said TEPCO Manager Teruaki Kobayashi.

Officials with his company also said they expect to use a remote-controlled robot sent by the U.S. within a few days to evaluate areas with high radiation. They are also setting up a panel of Japanese and American nuclear experts and American military personnel to address the crisis.

Tens of thousands of people have been displaced by the tsunami and magnitude-9.0 earthquake. Some saw their homes destroyed by the wall of water, while others have been ordered to leave a 12-mile (20-kilometer) zone around the plant because of

radiation leaks. Authorities have recommended that people in a 20-mile (30-kilometer) band might also want to leave.

Frustrated evacuees had begun trickling back into the smaller zone to gather belongings and check on their homes, but officials in Fukushima prefecture posted warnings at evacuation centers telling them not to go back for any reason.

"There is not only a risk that you may be contaminated, but also that you could contaminate others in the evacuation centers when you return," the warnings said. "The national government is now considering whether to allow brief return visits, so please bear with us."

The radiation has forced police officers trying to recover the dead from the evacuation zone to don white hazmat suits and radiation monitors. Officials believe more than 19,000 people died, but so far only about 11,000 bodies have been found. Local media estimate that hundreds of corpses remain.

OBITUARIES

James Bruening

ST. HELENA, Neb. — James Gerald "Jimmy" Bruening, age 48 of St. Helena, Nebraska, died on Wednesday, March 30, 2011 at Avera Sacred Heart Hospital in Yankton, South Dakota.

Mass of Christian Burial will be on Saturday, April 2, 2011 at 10:30 a.m. at the Holy Family (Immaculate Conception) Catholic Church in St. Helena with Rev. Eric Olsen officiating. Burial will be in the Immaculate Conception Cemetery in St. Helena.

Visitation will be on Friday from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. with a Vigil Service at 7:00 p.m. at the church. Visitation will begin one hour prior to services on Saturday at the church.

The Wintz Funeral Home in Hartington is in charge of arrangements.

Pallbearers will be Michael Bruening, Ken Bruening Jr., Nick Bruening, Mark Ewersmann, Paul Wintz, Keith Wintz, Steve Wintz, Kevin Wintz, Scott Bruening, Rich Bruening, Andy Miner and Joe Miner.

Jimmy was born on February 13, 1963 at Yankton, South Dakota to Bernard and Geraldine (Maly) Bruening. He attended Capitol Progress School in Hartington where he was taught by Beulah Noecker and also attended classes at Hartington Public School. He participated in the Nebraska Special Olympics while in school. Jimmy lived on the Bruening home place all of his life where he helped on the family dairy farm. He also helped local farmers and neighbors and



Bruening

enjoyed the company of good friends. He loved to fish, hunt and ride his 4 wheeler which he used to find out what was going on in the neighborhood. Jimmy belonged to the Holy Family (Immaculate

Conception) Catholic Church in St. Helena where he was an usher and helped mow the cemetery.

Jimmy is survived by 8 brothers and sisters, Daryl and Lili Bruening of Missouri Valley, Iowa; Ken and Mary Bruening of Aurora, Colorado; Jan and Henry "Butch" Ewersmann of Little Rock, Arkansas; Carla and Jim Wintz of Hartington; Tom and Pam Bruening of Norfolk, Nebraska; Lynn and Jude Hobza of Omaha, Nebraska; Joe and Juanita Bruening of St. Helena; Mary and Duane Miner of Seward, Nebraska; and many nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents and a brother, Ron.

Yankton Press & Dakotan
April 1, 2011

WINTZ FUNERAL HOME, INC.
Hartington * Coleridge * Crofton
203 W. Franklin, PO Box 505
Hartington, Nebraska 68739

Erna Brockman

COLERIDGE, Neb. — Erna Brockman, 100 of Coleridge, Neb., died on Wednesday (March 30, 2011) at the Osmond General Hospital, Osmond, Neb.

Funeral services are at 2 p.m. Saturday at Immanuel Lutheran

Church, Coleridge, with the Rev. Katherine Russell officiating. Burial will be at Lawn Ridge Cemetery, Coleridge.

Visitation is 5-7 p.m. Friday at Wintz Funeral Home, Coleridge. Visitation will continue on Saturday at church one hour prior to services.

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Saturday, April 2 • 9:30 am-10:45 am
The 144,000 and the Great Multitude
11:00 am-12:15 pm
The Sounding of the Seven Trumpets

Please join us for a free fellowship dinner following the Saturday 11AM meetings.

IN REMEMBRANCE

James G. "Jimmy" Bruening
10:30 AM, Saturday
Holy Family (Immaculate Conception) Catholic Church
St. Helena

Erna Brockman
2:00 PM, Saturday
Immanuel Lutheran Church
Coleridge

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